

REMARKS

Claims 1-16 are pending, including Independent claims 1, 7, 11 and 16. All claims are rejected on the basis of alleged indefiniteness and prior art.

Specifically, the independent claims were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, ¶ 2 as indefinite. However, the Examiner's explanation is not completely clear to Applicant. Nevertheless, Applicant has amended the claims to clarify the invention. These clarifications, and the explanation below, should obviate the Examiner's rejection under § 112.

As background, Applicant's invention addresses the situation where text items in multiple languages are to be converted into a voice output, e.g., by using a text-to-speech (TTS) engine. In a conventional TTS engine, a text item is processed and the voice output is generated according to the language of the text item. Thus, for example, a German word is processed and output in the German language, a Japanese word is processed and output in the Japanese language, and so on. Therefore, the need for processes and data for each language results in a complicated process and requires more resources. (Application, e.g., at ¶¶ 1-6.)

Applicant's Claim 1, as amended, recites an automated voice generator that takes a text item in a first language and generates a voice output in the pronunciation of a second language. More specifically, a character or string in the original text item that is not included in the second language is replaced by a "translating" means with a character or string in the second language that has an equivalent or similar pronunciation to the pronunciation of the character or string in the first language. The new text item, which includes the replacement character or string, is then output by pronouncing the new text item according to the pronunciation of the second language.

Applicant's invention provides an advantage over conventional TTS engines, because Applicant's invention reduces the languages needed to provide voice outputs in response to multilingual text items. For example, even if place names are in French, German and English, Applicant's invention can be used to provide voice outputs of all of the place names using only the pronunciation in one language, e.g., English. (Application, e.g., at ¶¶ 7-9, 12, 31.)

Claims 1-6 and 11-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,024,571 ("Renegar"). Renegar describes a foreign language communication system that is "hand-held" and "paper-based." The device includes a folded display surface that "provides rapid manual and visual accessing" of translations and pronunciations so that a user can formulate a sentence in a foreign language. (E.g., Abstract; Figs. 1-9; col. 2, line 66 – col. 3, line 27.)

Renegar does not provide an automated system or method for replacing a character or string in an original text item in a first language that is not included in a second, output language with a character or string in the second language that has an equivalent or similar pronunciation. Moreover, Renegar does not disclose an automated means or method of providing a voice output by pronouncing the new text item according to the pronunciation of the second language. To the contrary, Renegar teaches away from Applicant's automated invention by expressly distinguishing computer translators that do not provide fixed visual aids or user interaction (e.g., col. 2, lines 11-19; col. 38, lines 50-65).

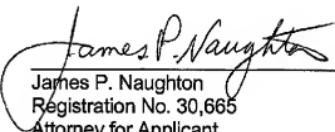
Regarding claim 16, Renegar also does not disclose a navigation apparatus, a map database for storing geographic information containing a place name text item representing each place name, or a means for reading out a place name text item from the map database. The passage cited by the Examiner (co. 13, lines 52-67) describes a Locator section 37 of the Renegar product (see Fig. 3) that displays words to allow a user to formulate questions to "navigate." There is no map database, or collection of place names, or automated means for reading out place names.

Claims 7-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Renegar in view of U.S. Patent 6,173,263 ("Conkie"). Independent claim 7 distinguishes over Renegar as described above. Additionally, claim 7 recites that when the original text item is abbreviated, the replacement of a character or string is done according to the full original text item. The Examiner concedes that Renegar does not disclose this feature, but asserts that this feature is found in Conkie. However, the cited passage in Conkie (col. 4, lines 31-57) describes a linguistic processor of a speech synthesizer that pronounces a non-abbreviated word in the same language as the abbreviation. There

is no suggestion that the two references can or should be combined in any way to approximate Applicant's claimed invention.

Accordingly, Applicant submits that the claims as amended are patentable over the cited art and respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of this application. If the Examiner believes the application still is not in condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned at (312) 321-4723.

Respectfully submitted,



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